

## RECOMMENDED STEPS FOR ORIGINATING VALOR AWARDS

THE STEPS BELOW WILL HELP JUNIOR OFFICERS ENSURE THAT THE AWARDS THEY ORIGINATE ON THEIR MARINES OR SAILORS FOR HEROIC ACTIONS CAN BE PROCESSED THROUGH THE ENDORSING CHAIN OF COMMAND UP TO THE APPROVAL AUTHORITY AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE.

1. DETERMINE KEY PERSONNEL INVOLVED. WHEN THE ORIGINATOR EITHER PERSONALLY OBSERVES, OR LEARNS FROM SUBORDINATE LEADERS, THAT A MARINE OR SAILOR TOOK SOME SPECIFIC ACTION(S) ON THE BATTLEFIELD BELIEVED TO BE HEROIC, THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD TALK TO SUBORDINATE LEADERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHICH MARINES OR SAILORS WERE IN A POSITION TO BE EYEWITNESSES TO THE ACTION.

(A) THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD ALSO DETERMINE IF ANY OTHER MARINES OR SAILORS MAY HAVE PERFORMED ACTS OF HEROISM DURING THE SAME COMBAT ACTION THAT MIGHT WARRANT A RECOMMENDATION FOR AN AWARD. MAKING THIS DETERMINATION EARLY IN THE AWARD PROCESS IS VITAL TO MEETING SECNAV'S REQUIREMENT THAT ALL AWARDS FOR THE SAME COMBAT ACTION MUST MOVE UP THE ENDORSING CHAIN AS A GROUP TO THE HIGHEST APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR ANY RECOMMENDED AWARDS IN THE GROUP.

(B) IF MORE THAN ONE MARINE OR SAILOR IS RECOMMENDED FOR AN AWARD FOR THE SAME ACTION, THE RANK AND NAME OF THAT INDIVIDUAL MUST BE LISTED IN BLOCK 21 OF THE NAVY MARINE CORPS FORM 11533 (NAVMC 11533). MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY MARINES OR SAILORS RECOMMENDED FOR THE SAME ACTION MUST BE SUBMITTED AT THE SAME TIME SO THEY CAN MOVE UP THE ENDORSING AND APPROVAL CHAIN FOR CONSIDERATION AS A GROUP.

2. INTERVIEW EYEWITNESSES. THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD ATTEMPT TO INTERVIEW THE EYEWITNESSES AS SOON AFTER THE COMBAT ACTION AS IS TACTICALLY FEASIBLE TO DETERMINE IF THEY WERE IN A POSITION THAT ALLOWED THEM TO SEE THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. THE LONGER THE ORIGINATOR WAITS AFTER THE COMBAT ACTION TO INTERVIEW WITNESSES AND GATHER EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS, THE GREATER THE POTENTIAL THAT WITNESSES WILL FORGET SOME OF THE KEY DETAILS, OR BECOME CASUALTIES AND UNAVAILABLE TO WRITE STATEMENTS.

(A) IN MANY CASES, THE COMBAT ENGAGEMENTS WHERE MARINES AND SAILORS DEMONSTRATE ACTS OF VALOR ARE FOLLOWED BY CONTINUING COMBAT OPERATIONS THAT DO NOT ALLOW THE JUNIOR OFFICERS TO TAKE THE TIME TO BEGIN GETTING WRITTEN STATEMENTS FROM THE EYEWITNESSES. IN SUCH CASES WHERE IT MAY BE DAYS BEFORE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY OCCURS, THE ORIGINATOR COULD UTILIZE A VOICE OR VIDEO RECORDER TO INTERVIEW THE EYEWITNESSES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE ACTION. THIS WILL HELP ENSURE THAT KEY DETAILS REGARDING THE ACTION ARE NOT FORGOTTEN OR CONFUSED WITH OTHER COMBAT ACTIONS THAT FOLLOW. WHILE REF (A) REQUIRES THAT THE AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED IN IAPS MUST BE SUPPORTED BY WRITTEN, SIGNED AND NOTARIZED STATEMENTS FROM THE EYEWITNESSES, THE RECORDINGS COULD HELP THE EYEWITNESS REMEMBER KEY FACTS WHEN THEY DO GET THE CHANCE TO WRITE THEIR STATEMENT. THE RECORDINGS COULD ALSO BE FORWARDED BACK TO

AN ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF WHERE A TYPED STATEMENT COULD BE PREPARED FROM THE RECORDING, AND THEN PROVIDED TO THE EYEWITNESS FOR SIGNATURE AND NOTARIZATION AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

(B) THE ACTIONS OF THE INTENDED RECIPIENT DURING A COMBAT ENGAGEMENT MAY FREQUENTLY COVER A SIGNIFICANT DISTANCE OR TIME, SUCH THAT NO SINGLE EYEWITNESS SAW ALL OF THE INTENDED RECIPIENT'S HEROIC ACTIONS. IN SUCH CASES, THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD ATTEMPT TO FIND TWO EYEWITNESSES FOR EACH OF THE SPECIFIC ACTS OF HEROISM DURING THAT ACTION, WITH A RESULT THAT STATEMENTS FROM THREE OR MORE EYEWITNESSES MAY BE NECESSARY TO SUBSTANTIATE ALL THE HEROIC ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE INTENDED RECIPIENT.

3. COLLECT AND REVIEW EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS. THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD TASK EACH EYEWITNESS TO WRITE A DETAILED STATEMENT IN THEIR OWN WORDS THAT CLEARLY OUTLINES WHAT ACTIONS THEY SPECIFICALLY SAW THE INTENDED RECIPIENT TAKE ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

(A) THE STATEMENT MUST PROVIDE THE EYEWITNESS' RANK, NAME, CONTACT INFORMATION, AND BILLET, ALONG WITH THE DATE AND LOCATION OF THE COMBAT ACTION, AND THE DATE THE STATEMENT WAS WRITTEN. IT SHOULD CLARIFY THE EYEWITNESS' LOCATION IN RELATION TO THE INTENDED RECIPIENT AT THE TIME THE HEROIC ACTION WAS OBSERVED AND SHOULD SPECIFY THAT THE EYEWITNESS SAW THE ACTION FOR WHICH THE AWARD IS BEING CONSIDERED. IF AN EYEWITNESS OBSERVED THE ACTIONS OF TWO MARINES OR SAILORS BEING CONSIDERED FOR COMBAT AWARDS FOR THE SAME ACTION, THE SAME STATEMENT FROM THAT EYEWITNESS MAY BE INCLUDED IN BOTH AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE EYEWITNESS SHOULD INCLUDE ALL RELEVANT DETAILS THAT WILL ASSIST THE ORIGINATOR, THE ENDORSING COMMANDERS, AND THE APPROVAL AUTHORITY IN MAKING THEIR OWN DETERMINATION ON THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF AWARD.

(B) THE ORIGINATOR MUST ENSURE EACH EYEWITNESS STATEMENT IS NOTARIZED BY A COMMISSIONED OFFICER AT THE TIME THE EYEWITNESS SIGNS THE STATEMENT, AND THAT THE PRINTED NAME OF THE NOTARIZING OFFICER IS INCLUDED ON THE STATEMENT.

(C) THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD REVIEW EACH STATEMENT IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC ACTIONS BY THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. IN REVIEWING THE EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS, IF THE ORIGINATOR BELIEVES THE EYEWITNESS LEFT OUT KEY DETAILS THAT WERE CITED DURING THE INTERVIEW, THE ORIGINATOR CAN ASK THE EYEWITNESS TO AMEND THE STATEMENT, POSSIBLY BY ASKING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS THAT THE EYEWITNESS CAN ANSWER, OR, IF NECESSARY, TO WRITE AN ADDITIONAL STATEMENT TO INCLUDE THE RELEVANT INFORMATION. ONCE THE ORIGINATOR CONFIRMS THE STATEMENTS ARE COMPLETE, THEY SHOULD BE SCANNED IN PREPARATION FOR UPLOADING TO THE AWARD RECOMMENDATION IN IAPS.

(D) WHILE THE ORIGINATOR MAY REQUEST A STATEMENT FROM THE INTENDED AWARD RECIPIENT REGARDING THE HEROIC ACTIONS OF ANOTHER MARINE OR SAILOR ALSO BEING RECOMMENDED FOR A COMBAT AWARD FOR THE SAME ACTION, THE STATEMENT FROM THE INTENDED RECIPIENT WILL NOT BE SUBMITTED WITH THAT MARINE'S OWN AWARD RECOMMENDATION.

4. DRAFT SUMMARY OF ACTION. ONLY AFTER READING ALL THE EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS SHOULD THE ORIGINATOR BEGIN TO DRAFT OF THE SUMMARY OF ACTION, WHICH IS THE MOST CRITICAL DOCUMENT IN THE AWARD RECOMMENDATION.

(A) THE SUMMARY OF ACTION SHOULD PRESENT A CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE UNIT AND BY THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. IT MUST PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DETAILS GATHERED FROM THE EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS TO CLEARLY OUTLINE THE CIRCUMSTANCES FACED BY THE INTENDED RECIPIENT AND THE HEROIC ACTIONS PERFORMED. AS PREVIOUSLY STATED, BECAUSE ALL HEROIC ACTIONS LISTED IN THE SUMMARY OF ACTION MUST BE SUBSTANTIATED BY TWO EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS, THE ORIGINATOR MUST UTILIZE THOSE STATEMENTS AS THE SOURCE FOR THE DETAILS INCLUDED IN THE SUMMARY OF ACTION.

(B) WHILE IAPS REQUIRES THE ORIGINATOR TO SELECT A RECOMMENDED AWARD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 'CREATE AWARD' PROCESS, IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT THE ORIGINATOR CONSIDER THEIR INITIAL SELECTION ONLY AS AN ESTIMATE. THEY SHOULD RESERVE THEIR FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDED AWARD AFTER COMPLETING THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF ACTION. IAPS ALLOWS THE ORIGINATOR TO EASILY CHANGE THE RECOMMENDED AWARD PRIOR TO HITTING 'SUBMIT' ON THE 'CREATE AWARD' SCREEN, WHICH ORIGINATES THE AWARD RECOMMENDATION.

5. CONFIRM APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDED AWARD. AFTER DRAFTING THE SUMMARY OF ACTION, THE ORIGINATOR SHOULD REVIEW THE CRITERIA IN IAPS FOR THE SPECIFIC COMBAT AWARD UNDER CONSIDERATION IN ORDER TO CONFIRM THAT THEY ARE RECOMMENDING THE MOST APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF AWARD. (IAPS DISPLAYS THE SECNAVINST 1650.1H CRITERIA FOR ALL AWARDS BY CLICKING ON THE IMAGE FOR THE RIBBON FOR THE RESPECTIVE AWARD ON THE 'CREATE AWARD' SCREEN.)

(A) BECAUSE THE FINAL DECISION ON AWARDS MUST BE MADE BY THE APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR THE HIGHEST AWARD RECOMMENDED OR ENDORSED, ORIGINATORS SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE POTENTIAL FOR UNNECESSARY DELAYS IF THEY RECOMMEND A HIGHER AWARD THAN WHAT THEY TRULY BELIEVE IS SUPPORTED BY THE FACTS IN THE SUMMARY OF ACTION AND THE EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS.

(B) IF THE ORIGINATOR HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY ORIGINATED COMBAT AWARDS, CONSULTING WITH OFFICERS WITH MORE EXPERIENCE, OR DISCUSSING THE AWARD WITH THE NEXT SENIOR COMMANDER TO DETERMINE HOW PREVIOUS HEROIC ACTIONS HAVE BEEN AWARDED, CAN BE BENEFICIAL TO MINIMIZING SUCH UNNECESSARY DELAYS.

6. DRAFT PROPOSED CITATION. AFTER CONFIRMING THE LEVEL OF RECOMMENDED AWARD, THE ORIGINATOR DRAFTS A PROPOSED CITATION THAT CLEARLY AND SUCCINCTLY SUMMARIZES THE MAJOR POINTS OF THE MARINE'S OR SAILOR'S HEROIC ACTIONS. THE OPENING AND CLOSING LINES FOR CITATIONS ARE PROVIDED IN IAPS. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON STRUCTURING THE CITATION CAN BE FOUND IN CHAPTER 2 OF REF (A) LOCATED ON THE MMMA HOMEPAGE AT [HTTPS://WWW.MANPOWER.USMC.MIL/PORTAL/PAGE/PORTAL/M\\_RA\\_HOME/MM/MA](https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/MA).

(A) IN DRAFTING THE PROPOSED CITATION, THE ORIGINATOR MUST ENSURE THE DATES OF THE HEROIC ACTION LISTED IN BLOCK 12 OF THE NAVMC 11533, IN THE SUMMARY OF ACTION, AND IN THE CITATION ALL MATCH.

(B) ALL INFORMATION IN THE CITATION MUST COME FROM THE SUMMARY OF ACTION; NO HEROIC ACTIONS OR ACHIEVEMENTS CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE CITATION IF THEY WERE NOT LISTED IN THE SUMMARY OF ACTION. IT IS ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE ORIGINATOR, WHILE CITING SPECIFIC HEROIC ACTION(S) IN THE PROPOSED CITATION, TAKE THE TIME TO AGAIN CROSS-CHECK EACH SPECIFIC HEROIC ACT LISTED IN THE SUMMARY OF ACTION TO CONFIRM IT IS SUPPORTED BY TWO EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS.

7. CONDUCT DETAILED REVIEW BEFORE SUBMITTING. BEFORE SUBMITTING THE AWARD RECOMMENDATION EITHER DIRECTLY TO THE FIRST ENDORSING OFFICER IN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND OR TO THE UNIT AWARDS ADMINISTRATOR FOR ROUTING, THE ORIGINATOR MUST CAREFULLY REVIEW AND CONFIRM THE FOLLOWING: THE NAVMC 11533 IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE; THE SUMMARY OF ACTION IS CLEAR AND COMPLETE; THE PROPOSED CITATION IS IN THE PROPER FORMAT FOR THE RECOMMENDED AWARD, IS CLEARLY WRITTEN AND FREE OF GRAMMAR ERRORS; ALL EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN PROPERLY NOTARIZED, SIGNED, AND ATTACHED IN IAPS; AND ALL AWARDS FOR PERSONNEL LISTED IN BLOCK 21 ARE READY TO BE SUBMITTED. ONLY AFTER THIS REVIEW IS COMPLETE SHOULD THE ORIGINATOR SUBMIT THE AWARD IN IAPS.